THE PULPIT

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Contributed by Readers of **THE PULPIT**

Does God Anticipate Catastrophe?

The lodge pole pine seems to anticipate catastrophe. It grows an exceedingly hard seed pod which sometimes remains unbroken for as long as thirty years. But when a forest fire sweeps its Rocky Mountain home, the heat of the conflagration cracks the hard pods and releases the seeds. Within a few short years a new virgin forest points its green cathedral spires heavenward. Does God anticipate catastrophe? During the past century and a quarter, in the wisdom of God, the church has sown the seeds of the coming Kingdom in every part of the globe. Now a world conflagration has come. Our civilization may even go the way of Nineveh and Tyre. But that will not be the end of the story! For after the fire has burned itself out, from the seeds of the gospel widely scattered and brought to earlier maturity there will emerge a new church, green with fresh life, dedicated anew to bringing the reign of God on earth. "Fear not, little flock; for it is the Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."—*M. J. McPike, First Baptist Church, Helena, Mont.*

The Influence of a Few

E. Stanley Jones reminds us that there were only two communists at first—in Paris. Those two gained adherents. In a few years that small disciplined group had captured Russia and profoundly influenced the history of the world. Wesley started with a few students united for prayer. Only a handful of men began the Reformation. Fewer than a hundred started the Renaissance. Jesus had twelve disciples. Numbers are only secondarily important. The extent and quality of the commitment, these are of the utmost importance.—*Clement B. Yinger, Grace Methodist Church, Haverhill, Mass.*

Exiles Who Refuse to Hate

At an early service on Easter morning, 1942, in Los Angeles, a pastor of Japanese descent told his people that although none of them had any idea of what was going to happen to them or knew where they were to be sent or whether they would ever be permitted to return to Los Angeles, this was their chance. "Christ turned the wrong that happened to him into redemptive power. That is our task too. Many non-Christians are becoming filled with resentment and cynicism. But I have not found a single Christian who was bitter. The Christian has something to hang on to." Another Japanese wrote in broken English from bleak Owens Valley to a white friend: "This is the time when I can get real experience of my life to see God through Jesus who gives us light. My life was too soft one. Now I give everything back to God which I thought I had and start to build a God's house on a rock within me. This is my hope. Be thankful and pray—these what I can do."—*Allan A. Hunter, Mt. Hollywood Congregational Church, Los Angeles, Calif.*

When Tyranny Trembles

A few weeks ago the Quisling government in Norway ordered the Bishop of Trondheim to allow a German hireling to speak in the cathedral on Sunday morning. In protest, the people remained at home, coming instead to the cathedral in the afternoon to hear their own minister. Soon after noon they began to arrive. Police barred the cathedral door. By time for the service a great crowd had assembled, confronting the armed police in silence while the freezing Arctic wind whipped around them. Then somebody started to sing. Luther's hymn, "A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing," was taken up by the whole vast throng. It rolled against the walls of the locked church with the thunder of surf in a storm. Strong men wept with joy and shouted the refrain. Nobody who heard it could doubt that long ago the blast of the trumpets of faith cracked the walls of Jericho, or that the song of the Christians of Trondheim would in the end prove as invincible. *(From an editorial in The Christian Century.)*

The impact of the Christian gospel on contemporary life is producing as many examples of redemptive power today as in any past generation. The Editor welcomes such illustrations for this page, and urges readers to submit those which have come under their observation. The illustrations in this page will suggest style and length.

Equality in Suffering

A Christian in France wrote from that unfortunate country last autumn: "We have joined the martyred Czechoslovakia and Poland. Massacres are going on at Prague, at Warsaw and Paris. That is how national unity and European unity are being realized. That unity is not being made by a just distribution of raw materials; it is being made by an *equal distribution of suffering.*" Often it takes a blow to unite us. Caught in a blackout in San Francisco, I was marooned in the lobby of the Y.M.C.A. Some twenty-five persons joined in song and discussion until the "all clear." The darkness united us, but when the lights came on, we went our several ways. Must we do that always?—*Daniel D. Walker, Methodist Youth Fellowship, San Francisco, Calif.*

A Clean Life in a Soiled World

In Leicestershire, England, there is a chapel which was built in the 17th century at the time when civil wars were dividing that country. Today one can still read the inscription of dedication, and find there a message for our times: 'In ye yeare 1653, when all things sacred were throughout ye nation either demollisht or profaned, Sir Robert Shirely, Baronet, founded this church: Whose singular praise it is to have done ye best things in ye worst times, and hoped them in ye most Callamitous." Yes, we can live a clean life in a soiled world! The shape of things to come—the kind of place our world is going to be after this devastating war is over—depends on our doing so.—*Howard J. Conn, First Congregational Church, Great Barrington, Mass.*

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The Pulpit

CHARLES CLAYTON MORRISON, *Editor*

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'In Earthen Vessels'

BY M. H. LICHLITER

We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the exceeding greatness of the power may be of God, and not from ourselves. II Corinthians 4:7.

"IN earthen vessels," says Paul. A strange place for a treasure, we say, but I fancy his daring symbolism caught the imagination of the sophisticated Corinthians. Had he mentioned a rich sandalwood chest or a silver jewel case they would have paid no attention to him. But to put a treasure in a rough, fragile earthenware jar—that was too much.

Then he told them what he meant. This treasure, he says, is "the radiance of the gospel of the glory of Christ who is in the image of God." Now, where in the world can one find a fitting receptacle for such a wonderful thing as that? And Paul answers — in fragile earthen vessels, in your life and mine—no matter how humble they may be.

Here is the central paradox of Christianity. God the Father suffers because of the sins and failures of men and women but he has to trust them to get his will done on earth. There is nobody else. It is no job for angels. It is your task and mine. To speak in human terms—and that is the only way human beings can speak of God—we have dared to say that God, because he is our Father, must be infinitely shocked and saddened by this tragic war. There is, as Dr. Clow once said, a dark line on God's face. But the only way God can ever get peace on the earth is through men and women of good will in the very nations that are now at one another's throats. It may be hard to believe, but he has no other hands than ours.

GOD'S APPARENT RECKLESSNESS

Let us consider, first of all, the apparent recklessness of God. What I am saying will not interest those who continue to look for miracles. Something mysterious is going to happen, they think; God will not allow this terrible war to go on until nations are exhausted and bankrupt and until civilization is in collapse. He will do something about it. He will kill Hitler and all the other imperial dreamers including power-intoxicated men in the democracies. Maybe there will be an earthquake in Japan and God will take over where we seem to have failed. Perhaps there will be a flood in Malaya to sweep the Japanese into the sea. Maybe there will be a typhus epidemic in Europe which will decimate Germany and the Axis powers but which will miraculously spare Russia. Is that it?

These wishful thinkers talk for all the world like the cleaning woman in "The Green Pastures" who counted forty-six thunderbolts which "de Lawd" sent down on the earth one morning before breakfast, or like those who wished with all their hearts that Gabriel would blow that horn and get it all over with once and for all. They think that something will happen to spare us the sacrifices which our leaders tell us we must face. Something will happen which will offset our own military and naval ineptitude and the glamorous techniques of civilian defense.

My answer in plain words is this. Even if all this happened—and more—it would not be a convincing proof of the divine intervention. God doesn't work that way. A despondent prophet once learned that God was not in the earthquake, or the fire, or the whirlwind —but in the still small voice speaking in the recesses of his own spirit. The fortuitous in history, the catastrophic in nature, the devastating sorrow in the individual life—are these the footsteps of the Almighty? We know that they are not. The "radiance of the gospel of the glory of Christ" is nowhere unless it is in the lives of humble men and women who love and follow him.

SALVATION IN HUMAN TERMS

That would seem to be the quintessence of recklessness. It is hard for us to realize that God's one, great, supreme and sufficient answer to the needs and sorrows and troubles and hopes of this world was his gift of himself in Jesus Christ. But, even so, we fail to realize that Jesus Christ was himself a very human person who, as Frederick Grant says, "was born, ate, slept, thirsted, walked, talked, grew weary, faced dangers, was arrested, scourged, spit upon and suffered the agonies of crucifixion in full measure."

That is true and it is also true that the very message which Jesus gave the world was in human terms. "It was no set of oracles he delivered, which some angel might have conveyed from heaven; they were the sayings, the stories, the admonitions of one who was completely and perfectly a man among men, and who went about Galilee as a lay teacher of religion."

There are times when I think that the worst thing that ever happened to Christianity was the development of the professional clergy. Jesus was a layman without any credentials except his own blameless life and his own unique consecration to God. He had no rabbinical training. He was a carpenter, a man of the working class. He lived in a village which, although it was on the great caravan route, was for some reason

looked upon with contempt. "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?"

More than that—the men who carried the torch after the death of Jesus were laymen. There wasn't a highly educated specialist in the whole crowd. Many of them were rough fishermen of Galilee; one was a Jewish mystic who was evidently a citizen of some prominence, one was a small business man, one was an apostate Jew —a tax collector for Rome. And for very many years, barring a few who like Paul had a university training or who like those saints of Caesar's household were among the economically privileged, the radiance of the gospel of the glory of Christ was transmitted to the ages by very ordinary men and women. Not many wise, not many mighty, not many noble were called. God chose the foolish to confound the wise, the weak to confound the strong, the base to confound the proud. "We have this treasure in earthen vessels."

That was the apparent recklessness of God, as we look back across the centuries. Or it may have been, as I think it was, the most successful and efficient religious strategy in all the ages. "One may almost say," concludes Dr. Grant, "that God was so sure of the eventual triumph of his truth that he had no care to choose a particular class of men to receive, to safeguard, to defend and hand on the message of eternal wisdom." And Jesus must have shared this divine recklessness. You remember his prayer: "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding and didst reveal them unto babes."

THE CHURCH STANDING IN THE BREACH

That ought to put iron into our blood. There is not much comfort in that view of history for the egotists, for those who feel themselves wiser and better than their fellows, for those who indulge themselves in any pride of intellect, or social prestige, or wealth, or political power. But for the rank and file of Christian believers in all the churches and outside the church, in all nations and among all peoples, for ordinary and quite commonplace men and women such as we are, there is a great deal of comfort in God's faith in their loyalty and their endurance.

We shall need both endurance and loyalty—such endurance as has been displayed by the brave army of General MacArthur in the Philippines and the heroic band of marines at Wake Island, whose courage will stand out in history as the shining glory of these dark days.

Does it ever occur to us that the church may have to stand in the breach and fight with its back to the wall? Do we realize that if the church lives at all, it will be because of the devotion of a small minority of men and women who care so deeply and who love Christ with such passion that nothing else matters? The struggle may not be as tragic for us as it is now for our fellow Christians in Europe, for our Jewish brethren everywhere, and for our Christian comrades in Japan and China, but it is not going to be easy to keep the faith.

When you and I speak of the church we think of a corporate institution. When God thinks of the church he has in mind men and women. The treasure is in earthen vessels. The radiance of the gospel of the glory of Christ is in those who carry on, through the long centuries, the Christian tradition.

TRADITION OR INSTITUTION?

As you know, this is the focus of the present controversy in religion. Is it the institution that persists, or the tradition? Can the institution die and the tradition live? Let me make that clear. Some hold that the persistence of the Christian community—that is, the Christian church—is the essence of Christianity. Even if the fire dies on the altar, even if the missionary passion which is inseparable from genuine Christianity is lost in secularism, even if we have nothing left except the historic creeds and established forms of worship, the continuing church will conserve religion.

On the other side of the debate are those who hold that it is the tradition and not the institution that matters. By the Christian tradition is meant the personal witness of consecrated men and women. The treasure, they say, is in earthen vessels. By the Christian tradition is meant the personal witness to the power of Christ to forgive sins, to strengthen one in all noble purposes, to help men and women fight their own weaknesses, to inspire them to seek that simplicity which is toward Christ—simplicity in opinion, in social habits, in the manner of one's daily life. It is the faith that, in spite of human failures, God does have his dwelling place with the humble and the contrite spirit, and that God can and does use the loyalty of ordinary men and women to keep faith in Jesus Christ alive upon the earth.

Professor James Bissett Pratt of Williams College speaks out rather bluntly: "Let the Christian tradition die out but for one generation and it will never return. Even as applied to a separate individual this is largely true. Keep your child untouched by the Christian tradition till he reaches maturity and it is exceedingly improbable that it will ever be able to reach down into his life. He may be able to become very learned in Christian theology, yes: but the kind of faith which has contributed more of value to the life of Europe and America than any other influence—this he will probably never feel. He will know about it but never live it." A true and startling statement!

THE LIGHTED GLORY

Of course, it is the living of it that counts. No matter how one stumbles along the upward path, no matter how earthen is the vessel, no matter how hard it may be to be a Christian, the destiny of Christianity rests with those who nourish the Christian tradition, be they many or few. They must be willing to do what MacArthur and his brave men did on the Bataan peninsula. It will take courage and endurance. Even if only a few survive the world revolution the tradition will live. "We have this treasure in earthen vessels." If the radiance of the gospel of the glory of Christ lives at all, it must live in them. May I dare to say—it must live in us?

But how? In what way may those who cherish the

Christian tradition conserve the truth through days of crisis? May I suggest an historical parallel—if you will not press the analogy too far. There was a time when the outlook for religion was infinitely darker than it is today. The tenth century dawned in an era of unspeakable depravity. The church was corrupt, the pope was despicable. A contemporary historian tells us that "men devoured each other like the fish of the sea."

In that one particular we seem to be emulating them by the mass slaughter of war. But our age is not depraved, nor is the church corrupt. The corporate church, as a social institution, is rather deeply enmeshed in the secular world, to be sure. It has endowments and investments and it has to be financed. It must deal with budgets and pledges and all the machinery of a business organization. But within the institution there are more men and women who are spiritually awake than ever before in history. There is absolutely no parallel between the church of the Dark Ages and the church of today.

Except at one point—if we choose to follow the example of those who defended the tradition as against the institution. In 910 A.D. a small group of earnest men founded the Abbey of Cluny. The monastic movement spread like wildfire until within a few years literally thousands of groups were formed all over Europe. There was a remarkable spiritual awakening among laymen. And women disgusted with the frivolities of social life sought a life of devotion.

PRAYER GROUPS THE SALVATION HOPE

Richard Roberts of Toronto goes to the heart of this deeply spiritual movement by saying briefly that "the redemption of western Europe from the hell of the Dark Ages began with a small band of men who had dedicated themselves to an ordered life of prayer and Christian practice." Of course there were unredeemed tracts of life in the medieval whole, but these scattered groups kept the personal witness to religion alive and laid the foundations of the Renaissance. It is the only way to salvage a threatened civilization. "This way begins in a spiritual awakening, and continues in a cultural renewal and in the resurrection and nurture of the arts." And the clue to this spiritual awakening is prayer.

That was the lighted glory of the Dark Ages. I commend the technique to you now. It is not a program to be set up by the church and handed down to the people who are asking, "Why doesn't the church *do* something?" It is a spontaneous getting together of small groups made up of congenial spirits—for prayer, for an intensive study of how religion may help to shape the post-war world, for a new grasp of the missionary enterprise of the church in terms of the present challenge, for anything that any group may want which will, in effect, help to keep the Christian tradition personal and vital.

This is a large order, to be sure, but it is the only way out for dynamic and creative religion. And God, with the recklessness of his faith in man, seems to be willing to stake the future of faith on the fidelity of the few.

The Salt of the Earth

By Ralph W. Sockman

Ye are the salt of the earth; but if . . . Matthew 5:13.

IT is a very genuine tribute which we pay to a person when we call him "the salt of the earth." We use that expression only of those whom we know pretty well, for it is a compliment which grows out of companionship. Those whom we call "the salt of the earth" are the friends who make fellowship enjoyable, who keep the milk of human kindness flowing, who put flavor and tang into the life around them.

Photo by Bachrach

And this is the tribute which Jesus paid to his followers. He said to them, "Ye are the salt of the earth."

To get the full force of the figure, let us pause a moment to consider the qualities and functions of salt. Salt is a substance which brings out the flavor of that with which it is mixed. Salt is an element which other things, even the earth, seem to require in order to be and remain themselves. When salt is added to food in proper proportions, it does not call attention to itself but brings out the natural taste of the article seasoned. It makes the egg taste more like an egg; it makes the carrot taste more like a carrot—however desirable that may be. But when salt so dominates a dish that we become conscious of it, then it detracts. So is it with persons who are the salt of the earth. They do not call attention to themselves. They do not dominate others, but rather they help others to be more truly and richly themselves.

Another trait of salt is that it penetrates what it touches. It is an active agent. It is not like a sponge, absorbing from what is around it, but rather it is pervasive, giving out its seasoning power. Similarly those persons who are the salt of the earth are not mere absorbents. They do not sponge. They spread influence.

Again, salt is a preservative. It checks deterioration. The forces of decay are ever at work. Our social circles have a tendency to disintegrate; our reforms are prone to run down; our enthusiasms quickly go sour. To check all this we need those who are the salt of the earth. Jesus did not say: "Ye are the sugar of the earth." There is a temporary sweetness which tomorrow turns sour; but there is a saltness which keeps things sweet. That is what the Christian's influence is to be—not a sentimentalism which sugar-coats the bitter facts of life, but a salty realism which today may not seem very pleasant but tomorrow will keep things unspoiled.

Such, then, is the sweeping and forceful figure Jesus used when he said to his followers: "Ye are the salt of the earth." Jesus looked on a world festering with corruption, on a people so oppressed that their hopes had gone sour, on a land of such hardship that life

had become stale and insipid. And in face of this he said to a little group of a dozen or so that they were the ones to be the flavoring, preserving, purifying force. What an amazing confidence he had in the pervasive power of the spirit which he imparted! Any casual spectator, looking at that little company gathered around the Galilean Carpenter, would surely have predicted that in a few years the little flurry would be forgotten. But nineteen centuries have passed and this morning let us ask how well the followers of Christ have made good on their commission to be "the salt of the earth."

I

First of all, I believe that Christ's church has proved itself the salt of the earth in the realm of personal living. When I first came to New York city as a young man, I tried to live for a time without active contact with the church. At first it felt pretty good to cut loose from the routine of churchgoing observed in my father's home. It was refreshing to lie in bed on Sunday mornings and then spend the afternoons visiting the various attractions of which a great city offers so many. But after a while the round of pleasure-seeking, unbroken by any worship or church fellowship, began to lose its taste and tang. The diversions ceased to divert. I was discovering what Francis Thompson, the medical student and poet, learned when after pursuing gaiety and good times he heard the voice of Christ, as the "Hound of Heaven," following him and saying, "All things betray thee who betrayest me." The gay round may rush on from thrill to thrill but after a while the artificial spicing of pleasures suffers the law of diminishing returns. We get fed up. It takes more and more stimulant to produce "kick." Yes, if you do not believe it, leave the spiritual element out of your life. Live only for the secular. For a time you may not know that you are missing anything, and then you may not know what you are missing, but eventually you will know that something is missing. Life will lose its tang and flavor.

Your work may be so interesting and engrossing that it keeps you running like a top, but after a while the top runs down through loss of health or retirement, and what is more feckless than the latter years of a man who has lived only for himself and his work, with no larger interests? Your life may be so full of secular and social activities that religion seems an unnecessary extra; then death breaks in to take away a loved one, and how empty all the worldliness seems! However merrily and successfully life is rolling along, this I say unto you, Leave God out and sooner or later something will happen to show you how stale, flat and unprofitable your life seems.

The church of Christ is in the world as the salt of the earth to preserve the flavor of our personal living. It renews a right spirit within us by restoring us to the sources and simplicities of life. It calls us back to the things that are genuine and real when artifice and pretense pall on us. On Christmas eve I have watched crowds come out of night clubs and away from the garish signs of Broadway to sing Christmas carols in the churches. Why? Because Bethlehem awakens the lost chord in the most worldly life and our buried best stirs to the call of the Christ Child.

II

Secondly, the Christ spirit has shown itself the salt of the earth in relation to family life. Let us admit that there have been beautiful homes nurtured on the soil of all the great religions. In Honolulu this past summer a Buddhist serving maid revealed as noble and kindly a spirit as one could desire to come from a Christian home. And Chinese family life has manifested a grace and charm often akin to rare old Oriental lace. Nevertheless, broadly speaking, it is true that the Hebrew-Christian religious tradition has begotten a home life superior to that of other religions. A few years ago a distinguished Japanese woman in a magazine article pointed out the pathetic status of wives in her land, where husbands are expected to find their recreation outside the family circle. The Moslem faith begets the harem, where woman is a plaything while beauty lasts and a drudge or drone when the bloom fades. But where the noble Hebrew ideal of womanhood and the Christ spirit have prevailed, woman has risen to her rightful place as the partner of her husband, has been given that equality of education and culture which produce the common interests essential to preserving marital love. Mrs. Carrie Chapman Catt declared recently that one of the cruelest tragedies of certain nazi-controlled areas in Europe is that schools are being closed to women. Let the spirit of Christ be taken out of a country and the status of womanhood would fall, home life would deteriorate.

Ah, yes, I know many a home which seems to maintain a high tone without any contact with the church or any open recognition of religion. But remember, those homes are sustained by the soil which the church has seasoned. And I ask you, would you care to rear a family in a region where there was no church nor any of the refining influences generated by it? Some years ago a college of agriculture sent out an announcement of a little town in upstate New York where men would not buy farms because it had no church. We may not go around to church but we want the church around, for second thought reveals that it is the salt of the earth which preserves the soil on which wholesome families can be reared.

III

Moreover, the followers of Christ have proved themselves the salt of the earth in a third realm, that of the artistic and the aesthetic. Many there are who seem to find in art a substitute for religion. Into secular culture has been injected so much aesthetic stimulation that people may have what they call "the finer things of life" without seeking any contact with the church. And the developments of secular art and architecture have caused many of our ecclesiastical creations to suffer by contrast, while the operas and oratorios now available by radio make the efforts of the village choir sound amateurish, to put it mildly. Once daily life was so drab and barren that going to church was a rather exciting break in the monotony of the week; but now

the secular offerings of entertainment are so varied that going to church seems to many a monotonous break in the excitement of the week.

But what fertilizes the soil for the stimulation of aesthetic creativity? Professor Hocking has reminded us that the great ages of art and science were preceded by periods of religious deepening, for these latter, as he said, "were attending to the fertilizations of the ground." We must not forget that great art springs from spirits which feel themselves in the play of great destinies. Rollicking ditties may rise from "the sidewalks of New York" but oratorios and symphonies require a deeper spiritual soil. Jazz and swing may be the emotional outlet of an environment dominated by the machine, but the lasting creations of great composers are cases where "deep calleth unto deep."

What would art be in a people completely divorced from religion? That is hard to predict, for as Bengson asserts: "We find in the past, we could find today, human societies with neither science nor art nor philosophy. But there has never been a society without religion." Yet while we have no precedent by which to appraise art in a society completely devoid of religious influence, we can contrast the aesthetic achievements of non-Christian lands with those of Christendom. And with all admiration for the exquisite creations of China, India and Japan, does it not have to be admitted that they lack the range and richness of emotion to be found in works inspired by Christ's influence? When one listens to the music of India with its prevailing minor notes or to the repetitious rhythms of Hawaiian melodies, and then thinks of our Hallelujiah Choruses and the haunting strains of Parsifal, he realizes that Christ put something into life which has given depth and height to human emotion. Haydn told Caprani that "at the thought of God his heart leaped for joy, and he could not help his music doing the same." It is Christ's kind of God who does that to a man's soul and a man's music. For this reason we assert that Christ's followers have shown themselves to be the salt of the earth in the realm of the artistic life as well as in the spheres of personal and family living.

IV

And now a fourth field offers proof of Christ's preserving savor. This is the civic and national realm. When Sinclair Lewis wrote his *Main Street,* he held up to scorn the stodginess and pettiness of the village church. In answer, the *New York Herald* wrote an editorial from which I quote: "The women, striving as best they may to make their neighborhood better, their neighbors and themselves happier, more useful. In thousands of such churches gifts are made cheerfully for medical work, educational work, religious work in foreign lands as well as nearer home. In them real sacrifices for mankind are made without false pretense and without expectation of applause. Unfortunate would be an American community without a church."

That is a noble tribute from a city newspaper. Isn't it about time that we quit lampooning the country churches for their littleness and narrowness and took a good look at their contribution to our civic life? To be sure, some little towns have too many struggling and competing churches. There need to be some mergers, and perhaps the demise of some stubborn deacons. To be sure, some churches have been left in out-of-the-way places like parish nest eggs and it is futile to think anything vital can be hatched from them by merely heating the buildings and holding services. Such needless nest eggs should be scrambled even at the cost of considerable cackling from the local roosts. But when I hear some big business men expatiating on the wasteful extravagance of the country churches, I think of some consecrated ministers whom I know to be running their churches and rearing their families on less than many an efficient high pressure executive spends for the maintenance of his motorcars. When I realize that the primary business of our society is the making of men and not the making of things, I wonder if the churches, big and little, scattered over this country are not just about America's most productive investment and industry. And when I read in the press, as I did recently, about a single army camp which was planned to cost $20,000,000 and then did cost over $50,000,000, I say, "Who are we to talk about the wastefulness of religion?" for I think what such a sum would produce if spent in the works of mercy and teaching and saving conducted by the churches.

In my youth I had occasion to observe two rural communities, in one of which there was a church, in the other of which there was none. In the former, the church was the center of social and recreational life, and there the neighbors met on the level of their higher interests. In the latter community, where there was no church, the people sought other social centers where they met on the level of their lower tastes. In the former the church observance of Christmas, Easter, Memorial Day, Thanksgiving gave tone and refinement to the community. In the latter, life tended more to drabness and vulgarity. In the former, the church invested individual life with dignity and the neighborhood with a community spirit; in the latter there was a lax morality. Out of that little church came lads fired with ambition for higher education, illumined by ideals and consecrated to the spirit of service. Standing here amid the skyscrapers of New York city, I look back to that little white church in Green Valley, Ohio, as symbolizing the thousands of similar structures which dot the landscape of our land. Only the all-knowing God can measure their influence, for they are the salt of the earth.

As I read history I am reminded that our national government was born out of the same revolutionary movement which engulfed France. The French Revolution and the American Revolution were part of the same tidal wave of liberty. In France men turned from the church and inaugurated what they called the Age of Reason. What happened? Liberty deteriorated into license; there followed a Reign of Terror wherein the streets of Paris ran with blood: and after that came a dictator named Napoleon. But on this side of the Atlantic, where the soil was cultivated by the Puritans of New England, the Quakers of Pennsylvania, the Huguenots of the Carolinas and the Roman Catholics

of Maryland, here where the churches maintained their freedom of conscience and their habits of prayer, America brought forth from her revolution, a Constitution, a Washington and an enduring Republic.

In his Farewell Address our first President said: "Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports." When Washington uttered those words he had in mind, of course, the kind of religion and morality inculcated by Jesus of Nazareth. Why are Christ's faith and ethics indispensable to preserving the spirit of our nation's Founding Fathers? Because a government of the people and for the people and by the people can continue only so long as the people are regarded as sons of God endowed at birth with the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Because the ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity can survive only where there is a firm faith in a God who is no respecter of persons but hath made of one blood all the races that dwell together on the face of the earth. Because men can be kept law-abiding only where there is a respect for the moral sanctions underlying the statute laws. Because the spirit of public service essential to sustain democratic government is fostered only where men catch the spirit of victorious sacrifice at the altars of God.

Yes, the influence of Christ mediated through his body, the church, is the salt of the earth which made it possible for our fathers to bring forth on this continent "a new nation conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal." And if that salt should lose its savor, wherewith shall it be salted today?

And as for that new international order for which we are now fighting and dreaming and planning, it needs no prolonged argument to demonstrate that the church of Christ in its world-wide ecumenical solidarity gives the soundest, if not almost the sole hope. It is the spirit of Christ which can keep alive the hope of the Kingdom's coming. It is his spirit which can sensitize the imaginations of men sufficiently to make the Golden Rule and the talk of brotherhood more than sounding brass and tinkling cymbal. It is his spirit which can restrain the angry passions of men, add charitableness to the charities demanded for rebuilding a broken world and lay the foundations of a just and durable peace.

Dr. Arthur Compton, the eminent physicist, was asked recently whether it would be possible to perfect rays which would intercept bombing planes and thus protect cities from air invasion. According to the report of the friend who interviewed him, his reply was that it is quite conceivable that rays may be invented powerful enough to check bombing planes: but if that is done, then somebody will invent something to counteract those rays. Thus science will go on with its blows and counter-blows. There is only one thing, said Professor Compton, which can prevent bombing raids, and that is the cultivation of good will.

Yes, if fifty years ago we Americans had taken a sum equivalent to the cost of a modern battleship and spent it through religious channels in cultivating the good will of Japan, we might not now be at war with that empire. And if in 1919 we had taken half the sum we have voted for defense in the past year and spent it with Christlike spirit in cultivating good will with Europe, we would most likely not now be engulfed in a global war.

"Ye are the salt of the earth, but if. . ."

Walk In the Light

By Robert Inglis

The Light shineth in the darkness, and the darkness cannot destroy it. John 1:5.

THE other evening as we all sat in the blackout one could hardly escape the symbolic aspects of the event. It does seem that the last glimmer of light has gone out and the world sits in darkness and the shadow of death. It is not only the darkness of war that engulfs us but also an upsurge of fear, of anger, of suspicion, of rumor, of bitterness, of insinuation and the like—all of those things which make the heart black. How desperate is our spiritual condition when it is looked upon as a glorious deed to kill a thousand men provided they are the enemy!

The nations of the world and most individuals have declared war, but the church has not, must not declare war. It must husband that light which will now soften the darkness that engulfs mankind and it must lead us on to a nobler time when faith in the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man shall be a splendid reality. It is easy to see that after years of bitter suffering and the development of the habit of destruction, even though they should be victorious, the people of our country could lose the capacity for justice, magnanimity, forgiveness and brotherly love. It has happened to us before and it will happen again unless the church in all humility, but in all seriousness, does its full duty for mankind.

With what a tragic period in history is my ministry in this church coincident! Some of you will remember that on my second Sunday with you I found it necessary to lay aside my prepared sermon in order to speak to you relative to the tragic moment, for that morning had witnessed the invasion of Poland. We have watched the dissolution of Western civilization. But as the need for a faith like that of Christ becomes more difficult and more necessary for the world our task as Christians and as a church becomes more exalted and more compelling.

How can the church help people walk in the light while they are in darkness? If the blind guide the blind both shall fall into the pit.

The first thing that comes to my mind is very obvious. The church should keep right on. That is

probably its major duty. The things which it does as a church—such as the worship of God, the religious education of the children, the study of current ethical problems, the ministry to the sick and bereaved, the winning of men and women to the higher allegiance to Christ, the development of comradeship and fellowship around the ideals of Christ—these are the very things that men need most now. To give them up or neglect them would be the height of folly. Our temptation is to sidetrack our energy and interest from the basic work of the church apart from which there is no re-establishment of the credit of mankind, apart from which there is no salvation, no hope of decency or righteousness.

NEW CHALLENGES TO THE CHURCH

Furthermore the need of people for this ministry is even greater now than ever. Men are tempted to despair and cynicism—not that they expect ultimate military defeat. It goes deeper than that. Men are tempted to be cynical about God's kingdom and his righteousness. After two thouand years of Christianity, after one hundred and thirty years of missionary effort, after a great experiment at popular education, after one hundred and fifty years of practice with political democracy, after all this, war, which is "a particular demonstration of the power of sin in this world and a defiance of the righteousness of God as revealed in Jesus Christ," holds the souls and destinies of men in its diabolical hands.

Whereas I am in no sense personally alarmed about the safety of my family there has been enough seriousness about the events of the past week and the reported visit of unfriendly bombers to arouse in one a realization of what it is like to be a hunted animal, a target for another human being. Children of God hunted and hunters! Some persons react to that situation with anger but I presume most of us are not angry. Rather we are filled with sorrow, a sense of futility about the whole business of civilization. Over against that despair the church must lead men to worship God, not in a mechanical way as so many recognize a supreme being, and not with the idea of comfort or protection but because amid this hurricane and slaughter God and his righteousness must be exalted above the edicts of nations and the fate of armies. Obviously the wisdom of men has turned out to be folly. Only the foolishness of Christ provides any hope. We will be tempted to put our faith in men, in human institutions, in chariots and machines. The church must stand through the fire to call men back to the righteousness and justice and love of God in whom there is hope.

THE PERIL OF HATE AND SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS

Our children will be taught all manner of things in school and on the street. Their tender souls will be poisoned with fear and hate. They will learn to glory in destruction and to cheer human massacre. The church must save them from a warped mentality, must help keep alive within them charity and friendliness, must warm their lives with the beauty of Christ—how he could suffer yet be magnanimous, how his love was more than a match for vengeance and enmity.

So it goes with all the functions of a church. They are greatly increased in significance and urgency. The sick and aged are now more lonely and in need of ministry than ever. Families are distraught with anxiety as husbands, brothers, sons are drawn into the maelstrom. As more millions of men are called away and the tragedy lengthens into months and years we shall all need to lean upon a solid rock and to feel the help of Christian understanding and love. Let the church be the church, now, more significantly and powerfully than ever.

In conjunction with the major task certain responsibilities flow from it. One of them is to protect the people from self-righteousness. This responsibility grows out of the exaltation of God above ourselves. Great are the tragedies that result from self-righteousness. Much injustice is based, not upon personal meanness, but upon the doctrine that "I" am above reproach. There follow naturally the terrors of tyranny. Beware of a king, a church or a country that can do no wrong. The tendency of the moment, out of the tremendous emotional drive of war, is to surround America with a halo of perfection. As a result we incapacitate ourselves for the establishment of a just peace. We remove ourselves from the possibilities of personal and national repentance and in so doing fix upon the world as standard our past sins. Only as nations, including our own, are humble and repent and follow a new way is there hope that our children's children will not suffer the agonies of this barbarism.

HISTORY BEHIND PEARL HARBOR

I presume that some will be wondering why I do not speak against the self-righteousness of our country's enemies. I do. They are desperately guilty. But I can no longer reach them. To so speak is only to shout into empty air or, by insinuation, to increase our own self-righteousness. I have long urged with all my might that we send more men to Japan to teach her people a better way, usually against the strenuous opposition of my fellow countrymen. Because of our failure to do that task adequately we now need to repent in sackcloth and ashes. But the efforts of American Christians in that direction are not entirely a failure. I am confident that my classmate, Raymond K. Oshimo, and our guest of last summer, Dr. Toyohiko Kagawa, among many, will speak fearlessly of their own country's self-righteousness. But whether they do or not our days of grace have gone. Now if Japan is motivated by other than Christian motives, because of our blindness and selfishness, our boys must pay for our failure with their blood.

But that is only a part of the picture. I was interested in a letter that came to me the other day. "Why did the Japanese strike us?" was the question of my friend. Did Germany push her into it to force our withdrawal from the Atlantic? Did England push her into it to force us to save her interests in the Far East? Or did our leaders blunder so badly as to force this showdown? Those were my friend's questions. Historians, twenty years hence, will write an amazing story of what lies behind the camouflage of current events.

Undoubtedly many factors converged to create this tragedy. But it is the duty of the church not to let America forget that this war was inevitable the day the Exclusion Act was passed by the United States Congress (unless we had repented of this act, which we never did) and that that is only a sample of the many contributions that we American citizens have made to this unhappy occasion. Someone will say: "Let bygones be bygones. We are in a war now." But that is exactly the point. If we fail to see the meaning of our own sin, if we fail to repent of it, then our self-righteousness will be written into the peace treaty and our children's children will have it all to go through again. We can't stop this war now. But, so help us God, let's stop the next one! That is a responsibility of the church.

TOWARD A DURABLE PEACE

That leads us to a broader and more inclusive statement of the same thing. In the fury of battle the average man forgets to concern himself with that for which he is fighting. The church cannot involve itself in war but it can work diligently for the establishment now of the bases of a just and durable peace. For instance, until there is an equitable solution of the world economic problem and the problem of security, not for America, but for the whole world including Japan, this awful thing will recur again and again. It is the business of the church to lay the foundations of a just and friendly world in the thinking of the people.

Another thing the church must do is to protect the interests and lives of innocent aliens. Christians must show the way of good will, pity and understanding. We must be more friendly than before because some of our fellow citizens have lost their heads and their hearts and have loosed "wild tongues that have not Thee in awe." These children of God, whom fortune has named aliens, are lonely, afraid and they may be hungry.

That also suggests a larger idea. One of the glorious expressions of the Christian faith during the past decade has been the fact that, very tenuously to be sure, but in reality, Christians of China and Christians of Japan have tried not to lose faith in each other, not to lose contact. The world has fallen completely to pieces. It is like a child's castle of blocks that has been kicked over by some thoughtless and cruel giant. But we Christians must devise ways of holding the world together. We can hold the world together with our prayers; we can hold it together by keeping alive the universal faith in Christ—that God is the God of all men and that all are brothers. Right here in Oakland we have the world in miniature. We can hold diverse peoples together by our friendship and service. When every other institution on earth is devoted to blowing the world apart Christians must be different and hold the world together.

THE CHURCH A HAVEN IN THE STORM

Another important thing, though it seems so small, is for Christians to be ballast for our community while we endure this terrible gale. In the emotional furor we are tempted to add fuel to the fire by our excitement and indiscretion. Little guesses grow into catastrophe. Never before have attitude and expression been so important. Irresponsible and unkindly acts and thoughts pile panic upon confusion. We must be careful lest church groups become war gossip groups. Rather they must become places where people regain their strength and composure and perspective. Let us call much among our neighbors not to indulge our excitement but to absorb their fears and to leave loveliness and a kind spirit behind.

I am thinking also of more obvious ways of serving our distraught community. Perhaps our service committee ought to be greatly expanded. I have thought that we might equip our building as a hostel for emergency which we would administer in cooperation with authorities but keep it distinctly Christian in environment and atmosphere. If I sense the wish of this church it is that we should be ready to help where there is suffering and that especially as Christians we should be concerned about those persons and that suffering which official agencies will probably neglect or ignore.

To that end I wish that we might draw many more families into the orbit of this church, partly to strengthen our hands that we may serve more generously and effectively, partly that the wings of this fellowship may enclose them.

Thus we shall walk in the light of compassion and humility and faith and love. And the darkness will not conquer that.

This Is Not the End

THIS is not the end of the world; it is the dawn of a new day. Once again God will give men the chance to beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Once more the call will come to make a better world than our fathers have known. The question is not, Will there be opportunity but rather, Will I be ready for the opportunity when it comes? There can be but one answer for him who feels the presence of a higher power, who knows the peace which passeth understanding. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is staid on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee."

The story is told of a traveler in Switzerland who engaged a guide and started on a mountain climbing adventure. Overtaken by darkness, the two stopped for the night at a little chalet up the trail. Hours after they had retired the traveler was awakened by the sound of terrific crashing and rumbling. Terrorized, he awakened his guide and said, "What is happening—is the world coming to an end?" Calmly, the guide answered him: "No, the world is not coming to an end. You see when the sun starts coming up on the other side of the mountain it touches the snow at the top of the peak and it goes hurtling down into the valley. Then its warm rays play upon the surface of the glacier and cause the ice to crack with loud reports. No, this is not the end of the world—it is the dawn of a new day."

WILLIAM MATHER LEWIS.

The Elusiveness of God

By George Arthur Buttrick

How long wilt Thou forget me, O Lord? Forever? How long wilt Thou hide Thy face from me? Psalm 13:1.

THAT cry comes now from all Christendom. God is hiding while his people perish. If skeptics were wise, they would come to the Bible—for their best skepticism. Atheistic books give no worthy prayers, but the Bible gives us worthy doubts. Therein lies its greatness: it is true to the whole range of our nature. It utters the taunt of the unbeliever, "Where is now thy God?" The taunt cuts deep because the believer has already asked the question and poured it out in prayer: "All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, 'He trusted on the Lord'" . . . "Verily Thou art a God that hidest Thyself." How starkly honest! How scientifically honest! How courageously and savingly honest! The Bible asks our contemporary question about the elusiveness of God.

WHY DOES GOD HIDE?

Elusiveness is the word. God plays "hide and seek": now we glimpse him, now he is gone. We see him in moments of insight, but lose him in the routine task. We see him in retrospect—the wake of the ship catches the light, Moses beheld God "when he had passed by," and we do not know what bliss we had with our children until they are grown to manhood: so we see God in retrospect—but we cannot discern him in his present ways.

We see God in the favored time (how near he is in the unusual splendor of this springtime!), but we cannot trace any Providence in the blind brutishness of armies in Athens (Hitler on the Acropolis!). God does with us as we with little children: He peeps at us through the fingers of his hands. Now he smiles, now the hands are tight shut in a dark room. Sometimes we cry in glad gratitude, "The Lord is my shepherd"; sometimes we cry in agony, "Oh, that I knew where I might find him! Oh, that Thou wouldest rend the heavens and come down!" His dealings with us are tantalizing, and sometimes almost torturing. He does not leave us in doubt long enough to destroy our faith, nor in faith long enough to destroy our doubt! This method is immemorial. This ancient text is troubled by it—"How long wilt Thou hide Thy face from me?"—and we are troubled. At this juncture in history, how we are troubled! The "hide and seek" strategy must have its reasons. Can we trace them? Why this elusiveness of God?

It will help us in this issue to remember our creaturehood: man is but man, and God is God. We know how even ten years can change our appraisal of events. Then remember that God sees the end from the beginning, while we see only a fleeting and distorted moment. He is the creator of the abyss of space, the majesty of worlds unnumbered, the aeonian unfolding of cosmic life: we are but creatures whose days are few.

Our sins blind us. Imagine some angel-guest knocking quietly on each door. The miser counting his gold cannot hear, nor the worldling plotting his brief pleasure. The politician planning his campaign cannot hear, nor the housewife listening to news on the radio. The scholar voraciously intent on his books cannot hear, nor perchance the preacher busy with his sermon. Often we say that God is hiding his face when in truth our face is turned from him.

But even if there were no selfishness to film our eyes, our finitude still would tempt us to misjudge God's presence. You have seen the picture of the blind Milton dictating to his daughter. He sits gazing from sightless eyes into lightless space. He cannot read either man's books (the garnered treasure of their years) or God's book of earth and sky, except as others read for him. We would not have made him blind. Then we remember what he dictated about his blindness. It begins in realism:

> When I consider how my light is spent
> Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide . . .

But it ends in higher realism:

> God doth not need
> Either man's work or His own gifts; who best
> Bear His mild yoke, they serve Him best; His state
> Is kingly; thousands at His bidding speed,
> And post o'er land and ocean without rest;
> They also serve who only stand and wait.

We would not have made him blind; but could we then have made that sonnet? We would not have flung mountainous barriers across the planet, nor thunder's roll, nor lightning's flash; but would we wish an always level earth, an always cloudless sky, a world bereft of terror and glory? We would remove all suffering; but how then could we keep patience, heroism and compassion? We would not have made death; but would we covet an endless tale of human days? We would never have made a Calvary; but, oh, if that Cross were forever taken from the skyline of our life! So we ponder. Soon we turn on ourselves: "Behold, ye know not anything!" Then, we know we are creatures of a day. We stretch lame hands of faith. We grope on the world's vast altar-stairs. We worship—because of a Mystery. We see God then, and know that we are held in him even when we cannot see.

A LOWLY GOD NEEDED

It is good strategy when we raise the question, "Why is God this kind of God?" to retort on ourselves, "Would you wish him to be the other kind of God?" For instance, why does God hide? The rebuttal is, would we wish him always to obtrude? If God were only a God of power, we, his creatures (if such a God could have

made us as we are), would end by despising him. What do we think of neighbors who constantly obtrude, whose voices are loud, whose clothes and manners are loud, who insist on the spotlight and the stage-center? What would we think of such a God? Godlikeness and such brutish self-display are a contradiction in terms: Godlikeness and a worthy lowliness are almost synonymous.

We ask why God hides. But what would we wish for worship? That God shall paint his swastika on every landscape, drive his mammoth tanks down every meadow, bellow his orders from every sky, and require us to "Heil!" at every corner? Hitlerism is hardly divine; it is an infantile and colossal depravity. On earth that friend is best who is lowly, whose very quietness testifies to reserves of character, who gradually reveals depths of insight for us to explore, who wins by loyalty, and who "does good by stealth."

In heaven also such a Friend is best. The story is told of a craftsman in stained-glass who had been commissioned to make church windows representing the Apostles, and who paused at a wayside altar to pray for skill and grace in the task. As he went home he paused in a church where he had miserably failed, according to his standards, in a window portraying Christ: perhaps he could learn from his blunders. There he saw, with a reverent wonder, that his window had been changed. It was now one blood-red rose from which Christ came as in a daybreak—in such light that the whole church was transfigured. Whose hand had been there? No human hand. So God works—unseen, the Friend of our failures, as though the work were ours—and then he hides his face.

FINDING OURSELVES—AND GOD

God is born a Babe in Bethlehem. He toils, a Carpenter in a village shop. He shrinks from what men call "popularity," and does good by stealth: "See that thou tell no man." He dies upon a cross, and is buried in shame. He rises in the hearts of the sorrowing and the faithful. Why does God hide? Perhaps because we could not worship any other God. He is quiet because love is quiet: "Love suffereth long, and is kind. Love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own"—but, "love never faileth."

There is a further word: God seems to hide because only so can we grow. He deals with us as parents with their children. They send them to school—and God pity the boy whose mother follows him there to coddle him through all his lessons, and defend him through all the turmoil and politics of the playground. Have you seen such a boy when he is grown to manhood? The psychologists speak of an "Oedipus complex"—excessive mother-dependence. It is a disease—and tragic: she has given her child leukemia of the spirit. Wise parents must disappear at times, and yet always be near enough in love. So are God's ways with us: his apparent absence is not cruelty, but grace. The eagle tears the nest when the brood is sufficiently grown, and flies away, leaving them defenseless upon a ledge of rock against the sky. They must follow if they would find. They try to follow, and fall. But they fall on outspread pinions, and their own wings grow. God hides his face, but "underneath are the everlasting arms."

There is a better illustration—in Rudyard Kipling's poem, "The Explorer":

> There's no sense in going further—it's the edge of cultivation,
> So they said, and I believed it—broke my land and sowed my crop—
> Built my barns and strung my fences in the little border station
> Tucked away below the foothills where the trails run out and stop.
> Till a voice, as bad as Conscience, rang interminable changes
> On one everlasting whisper day and night repeated—so:
> "Something hidden. Go and find it. Go and look beyond the ranges—
> Something lost behind the ranges. Lost and waiting for you. Go!"

He went. He camped above the tree-line. He scaled the mountain, crossed the further desert, climbed new mountains—until he found a new wide land:

> Plotted sites of future cities, traced the easy grades between them;
> Watched unharnessed rapids wasting fifty-thousand head an hour . . .

Other men would follow—by the trail he blazed. They would name the cities by their name, and they would be reckoned the pioneers. He might be forgotten. No matter!

> Have I named one single river? Have I claimed one single acre?
> Have I kept one single nugget—barring samples? No, not I,
> Because my price was paid me ten times over by my Maker.
> But you wouldn't understand it. You go up and occupy.

BEYOND CHILDHOOD FEARS

Do we understand? Do we? Beyond our present knowledge in astronomy and medicine—"something hidden"! Beyond our present poverty and unrest—"something hidden," a new comradeship of toil! Beyond our present wars and their mountainous waste and wanton cruelty—"something hidden," a new community of nations! Beyond our personal selfishness and petty prayers—"something hidden," a new, radiant friendship with God! We leave the plains of prosaic life, we camp above the tree-line, we struggle across deserts; and often in dark misgiving we long for the old comfortable safety. But the price is "paid us ten times over." "*Someone* hidden": we have found ourselves—and God.

Why does God hide? Because our eyes are dim, and we cannot see. Why does God hide? Because he is lowly, and is best revealed in that Christ who walked with men, "though their eyes were holden that they should not know him." Why does God hide? To lure us on from partial truth and poor achievement until

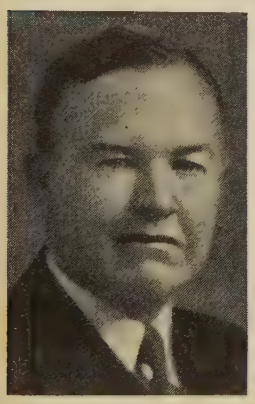
we find him in a worthier earth and a purer worship.

"How long wilt Thou forget me, O Lord?" Not for one moment! We are never forgotten, and all his ways are love. After graduation from earth, and from all its present cruel trampling, we shall look back on this strife and folly "with purer, other eyes"—as grown men on the foolishness of childhood fears. "How long wilt Thou hide Thy face from me?" Not long! But we must follow his whisper, each fleeting glimpse of his hiddenness. Across our darkened earth, across our earthbound souls, a voice now rings, "as bad as conscience." For it is God in our troubled conscience. We must follow. Then we shall find ourselves—and him. Seeking, we shall find. Finding, we shall love. Loving, we shall live.

The Christian Home a Pattern of Salvation

By Clarence E. Lemmon

IT is not necessary to go to an ancient scripture for a text on the Christian home. Nor do we need to indulge in sentimental nostalgia for the "old-fashioned home" of fireplace, huge family Bible, father with his patriarchal whiskers and pontifical manner or the sedate maturity of a Whistler's mother. Nor do we need to lean heavily on those men and women who write knowingly about family life. All of these things are good but not necessary to our purpose. We choose rather to take the Christian home itself as a text. If you want the theme for a sermon on the Christian home just look in your own neighborhood, on your own block and among your own acquaintances. If the Christian religion has any one conspicuous success, it is with the family. There are not enough of these Christian homes and we would like to multiply them; they are not good enough in their Christian ideals; but here they are, right under our observation, wholesome, modern, living realities, best expression of the religion of Christ; so why not take them as the theme and consider them as the pattern for the extension of the Christian enterprise?



I

These Christian homes have a general pattern of conduct and life which we recognize as authentic, but which it is difficult to describe. They are not perfect, they have no absoluteness of life or conduct, no creedal boundaries of belief, no stilted rituals, no hard and fast set of rules, no formidable straitjackets of doctrine. There is in the present-day Christian home a spirit of informal good will, a mutual give-and-take. The patriarchal dignity of the old-fashioned father suffers by the pleasantry of family spoofing and even the maternal office must not assume too much superiority else it too will be debunked by a public opinion within the home. The children are junior partners and find their creative place in the family life. In the true Christian home the disciplines are implied rather than enforced and a sort of mutual good will seems to be the ruling spirit. The home is democratic in that every member has his say and the tendency is for the stronger to support the weaker members without too much obvious coddling. Because it has good humor, and takes itself seriously but not too seriously, it is a place that has the capacity both to enjoy fun and endure suffering.

This Christian family is likely to be interested in the church. The church is a focus of family interest. It is a natural subject of conversation. It is in the program of the week's activities, and each member of the family has a place in its work. The sanctions of the Christian religion are powerful because they are not so much preached but more often practiced than elsewhere in the social order.

And this picture of the Christian home, its general pattern, its implied disciplines, authority, cooperative life and major interests all sum up to something that we call *the family spirit*. It is the extension of this spirit that offers a hope for the salvation of our world.

II

While this family spirit is a qualitative spiritual achievement, it does not exist in a social vacuum. The family lives in a house and is supported by an income. If this Christian family spirit is to be maintained this house must at least be decent, this income must have some basic adequacy, the budget must be in fair control. If we would multiply our Christian homes we must so order our social structure as to make possible the existence and survival of the family spirit. There is in this pattern of the Christian home a distinct social challenge.

Common observation indicates that the Christian family spirit finds difficulty in surviving either riches or poverty. The very rich have great difficulty in keeping alive this practice of mutual give-and-take. That subtle quality of family life which we are seeking to interpret seems not to be able to withstand too much goods, too many luxuries, too generous allowances or too fat budgets. The best homes are not found among the rich. It is equally difficult for the family spirit to rise above poverty. The nation was surprised and shocked a few years ago to have the Brookings Reports show that in the prosperous year of 1929 there were 21 per cent of the families in America with incomes of less than $1000. Another 21 per cent had incomes of less than $1500 per year. It must have been far worse in the depression. How can we hope to make Christian homes prevail in this land where there is such poverty, such sad and desperate lack of income?

Not long ago I drove out onto the paved highway and came up behind a school bus. It was interesting to watch these children enjoy the bus ride. They had been to the city where they were attending a fine school.

When the bus stopped, several children got out and went into their near-by homes. These homes were shacks, terrible places, hardly fit for cattle. What a social paradox! Here we have a civilization that will pave a road, provide a bus for transportation, build a $200,000 school building, and then dump its children into homes so squalid and uninviting.

We can never Christianize America by multiplying our Christian homes unless we do something constructive about our housing. In every community this is the drab picture. We have nice homes, wealthy homes, good middle-class homes, but all too many are so ugly, uninviting and discomforting as to make it difficult for Christian impulses to survive. Our nation has built roads and schools and churches and municipal buildings. We have barely started to build decent homes for the people. The first attempt to stimulate home building and ownership by government agencies has been under the pressure of the depression. Does not this hold out to the American people their greatest economic obligation? We need to build over the homes of large sections of our people. Does this not also hold out our greatest economic hope? The last post-war depression was lifted in part by huge projects of public works. The next post-war depression may be lifted by a great program of home construction.

Our imaginations need to be stimulated in this direction. We do not maintain that the Christian home can live by bread alone, but without the basic material comforts it is difficult for its spirit to survive. The conscience of our social order must be informed and stimulated by the Christian ideal at this point of equalizing and insuring the material basis for family life in America.

III

One of the most baffling problems in the spread of the Christian religion is the gap between individual and social ethics. Reinhold Niebuhr underscored that truth in his *Moral Man and Immoral Society*. He pointed out the disparity between our individual ethics and our group standards. Thus the morality of our institutions, of our commerce and trade, of our politics and government, and especially of our international relationships, is largely pagan. To bridge that gap between the individual and the group is necessary if we are to resolve this ethical paradox. We preach an individual ethics which we seem unable to apply in group situations. Is not the example of the Christian family a partial answer to this dilemma? What the social groups of this world need is this *family spirit*—the spirit that characterizes the Christian home. It is the preachable ideal for the larger Christian salvation.

This process can well begin with the local church. Every pastor knows that the way to develop a harmonious, friendly and constructive church is to encourage the family spirit. A church congregation is not put together as a carpenter builds a house but it is grown by continuous friendly association like the development of the family. If it is held together alone by a set of doctrines it will develop its own discouraging heresies; if it is held together by organizations it is certain to feel the clash of wheels; if it is held together by shrewd management it will become as the secular world; but if it is developed and grown in the spirit of a Christian family it will be animated by that friendly give-and-take, that mutual spirit of good will, that enthusiastic partnership of effort that characterizes the Christian home. A wholesome local church is one that is but an extension of this family pattern.

This pattern does not apply to the church alone. It is equally pertinent to the successful management of a good school, hospital or social center.

Even in the realm of business institutions it can be applied. I had noticed that a certain merchant of my acquaintance was enjoying a decided increase in business. It seemed that he had more clerks, that these clerks were busier, and there was a general evidence of his own increasing prosperity and satisfaction. I remarked to him: "I notice that your business has been improving. This is not true to the same extent with other businesses in the town. What is the secret of your increasing trade?"

His answer was illuminating: "It is like this. Until about a year ago we had a commission system. All of my employees who met the public received a commission on their individual sales. None of us were doing very well. We were just a bunch of individualists, each man for himself. I called them together one day and said: 'I am going to discontinue the commission plan and introduce a new system. From this time forward every man will get a straight salary. Your salary will at least equal the total of the commissions you have been receiving. We will all be one family under the same roof. If you are doing something else and don't sell a dollar's worth of goods you will get your salary.' The result was astonishing. We were no longer individualists, we became a business family. We began to help each other instead of competing. We no longer complained at having to do necessary cleanup jobs because it kept us from meeting the trade. We no longer tried to grab each other's customers. In a slack time during the summer the clerks themselves suggested an improvement in the store and did the work which would ordinarily have cost several hundred dollars. One of their number took sick and the force insisted upon the firm's paying his full salary for the period saying they would pitch in and work harder while he was ill. The result is that we have done a larger business, our customers are better satisfied, the men are getting more money, my profits are larger. I guess it is the good old family spirit."

Suppose we take another illustration. A man starts out to build a house. For many years he has dreamed of this home and he and his wife have studied plans and saved money for a down payment on the new home. They are filled with enthusiasm and hope. They get the architect and the builder and then start out on what should be a happy experience. But they find themselves frustrated and irritated at every turn. There is continual bickering. The contractor does not like some of the specifications of the architect. The mason does not work well with the excavator. The carpenters do not cooperate with the plumber. The electrician and the

plasterer do not time their services. The loan does not come through on time and the workers are not promptly paid. The completion of the new home is delayed, and everyone is irritated. There are a series of competitive irritations among such groups as labor, capital, finance, ownership, building, planning. It is a perfect "design" for unhappiness.

Suppose this pattern could be changed. Suppose before the house is started the contractor could get representatives of these groups together. Suppose the architect, the excavator, the mason, the carpenter, the plasterer, the electrician and the banker could all come together, and the contractor could say: "Now our friend here wants a new house. He has saved part of his money and will have to borrow some. It is his home and he wants it nice. Let us all try to build his house for him and do a good job, so he will be satisfied. I want you all to be well paid for your work and I of course want to make some profit. Let us all work together. What we need is the good old family spirit."

Is not this an illustration of how we might well use the spirit of the Christian home in the wider and more complicated relationships of our modern civilization? It is not an impossible hope. It is something very much worth trying.

The terrible cleavages of interest in our modern complex social order which are the despair of all citizens of good will are caused by too much remoteness. Capitalists meet together in their conventions and the longer they meet the more they develop their own class consciousness and prejudices. They need a scapegoat and find one in labor. In turn the laboring men are meeting in their conventions and they too are developing a mass mind prejudice. They need a scapegoat and there is capital, greedy and predatory. There is not much conciliation in such procedure. These asperities are cushioned by law on our statute books, by the desperate need of all for profits, in part by public opinion, but the true path of conciliation is always to break down the remoteness and settle the difficulties in something like a family circle. The government conciliator of a capital-labor dispute is usually some patient, witty Irishman, father of five children, who has the knack of getting opposing leaders into a room and wearing down their irritations until they find some agreement. He gets them under a single roof as close together as he can, and keeps them there, until there is some natural growth of the family spirit.

This is the ultimate conciliation of every human quarrel. Right now the world is in a terrible state of violence, revolution and warfare. If this terrible war is ever conciliated, it will be by the method of conference. A group of leaders of the nations will come together some day under one single roof. They will remain together day after day. They will get acquainted with one another. They will learn one another's difficulties and problems. A mutual sympathy will grow. A common desire for peace will rise in their hearts. The family spirit will develop. It is under a single roof that the final treaty of peace will be made. It is under one roof that it will be signed. And if this spirit is genuine, if they are truly converted, they may be able to spread it out over the earth so that it will be possible to have a Family of Nations.

IV

It is well for us to realize on this Sunday which is set apart as a day of festival for the Christian home, the implications of what we do when we cultivate the graces of a Christlike family. When we rear our children and guide our youth in the spirit of a Christian family we are creating a social unit which is an example and an inspiration to the whole of society. We are equipping these children with the skill, the ideals and the methods by which they can extend to other and wider circles this saving spirit. We are not only giving them the surest guarantee of happiness for themselves, but are laying out for them a pattern by which they can reconcile and save their world.

Light Out of Darkness

THROUGHOUT human history, over and over again, it has been in times of darkness, calamity and evil that new light and new revelations of truth have broken through from God to men. Jesus, Isaiah and the prophets spoke out of such times and showed new ways of light and love and goodness and peace for the human race. The present world situation is no different qualitatively than previous dark times. It differs only quantitatively. It is world-wide. But the very fact that it is world-wide, in turn makes it possible for the new light and truth when it breaks through also to go around the world and lead the entire human race into newness of life.

Now the prophets who appear in dark days always come from among those who refuse to allow their thinking and attitudes to be altered or coerced by the pressure of the contemporary circumstances in which they live, but who insist upon steadfast loyalty to eternal principles, come what may. In fact, those who in dark days bring new light and leading to mankind go a step farther. They press forward, as Jesus did, on new frontiers of goodness. They bring new revelations and understanding of greater potential goodness than man has ever before dreamed of as possible. Some religious thinkers, like Gerald Heard in his studies of the Lord's Prayer and the Beatitudes, and others, are already exploring the outposts of new spiritual achievements for the human race. When the Light breaks through again, it will go round the world. And our eyes shall behold the salvation which God has prepared for all people. JAMES MYERS.

CHRIST was crucified upon the customs of men, not upon a cross of wood but upon the cross of customs. The wood of his cross has molded away long ago. The custom of crucifixion has itself vanished away, but Christ is still crucified upon the customs of men, and the crux of the problem is the challenge between that perfect personality and the ever changing customs that bring him constantly to new trials.

FREDERICK W. NORWOOD.

The Point of No Return

A High School Commencement Address

By Bernard C. Clausen

ONE of the happiest men I have ever heard about wrote the poem printed in our Bibles as Psalm 84. It looks like prose on the page, and its old-fashioned words may not sound like the height of joy to us. But this man had the secret of successful living.

"How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts!" "Blessed are they that dwell in thy house." "Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee." "For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand." "O Lord of Hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee."

Any man who has learned to feel like that about life ought to be willing to record his secret formula. And this man did. Hidden in the middle of a verse in the middle of the psalm are two words which give us the clue—"I'd rather."

Say these words now at your age, in the right direction; repeat them again and again a thousand times as you make your daily choices, in the right direction—and you will find happiness and success. You must master your preferences, you must be the controller of your choices. What develops out of your future can be predicted largely by observing what you do and say after you have said, "I'd rather."

LITTLE WORDS, BUT MIGHTY

It is easy to scorn and underrate these little words. They sound so tentative and unimpressive. Big, bold, confident words like "I will" or "I won't" seem much more important. Surely out of such finality our real decisions come, we think. But we forget that by the time we are ready to speak out with ultimate choices, the direction we take has already been set by the thousand preferences we have expressed as we said, "I'd rather."

Last year, at a high school commencement on the tip end of Long Island, I heard the valedictorian of the class play a trumpet solo. He was national champion trumpet player among all the high schools of America. As he was announced I heard the great roar of applause from the audience, and knew his town was honoring him for some really great human victory. I watched him and soon discovered what it was. He played the instrument with his left hand alone, while at his right side there hung withered and helpless a stump of a right arm. Think of the battle he fought with that disheartening limitation! He did not win by saying, "I will." Instead he said, through the months and the years, hundreds of times, "I'd rather." "I'd rather practice on the trumpet than run out and play with the boys." "I'd rather read musical literature than spend my time on the funnies." At last he reached the time when he could say, "I will," and make good, gloriously.

THE POINT OF NO RETURN

Juan Trippe, president of Pan-American Air-Ways, is one of the new heroes of American youth. He worked out the vast plans for transoceanic passenger service via the Clipper airships. Last spring the Royal Aeronautical Society summoned him to London to read a paper, as the outstanding achievement of the year in aviation. His report described the "How-goes-it" chart which now hangs over the instrument board in each ocean-going airliner. On the chart is a red line showing the performance of the ideal flight, with conditions all perfect. Beneath that line automatic instruments record, before the pilot's eyes, the real situation as the journey progresses—miles covered, miles still to be covered, miles per gallon of gasoline, gallons of gasoline still remaining, etc. Up and down across the chart is drawn another red line which marks "the point of no return." Up to that point, the pilot has a choice. He could turn back if there were bad storms ahead or if his motors began to misbehave. He would have gasoline enough in the tanks to take him all the way home. But beyond that point, he must push on. Whatever the bad news, there can be no turning back.

Set up a chart like that on your instrument board, now. Realize that while you say carelessly, "I'd rather," you are nearing day by day the "point of no return." Long before you are ready to say "I will" or "I won't," you have gone so far that you have no chance to turn back.

Raymond Gram Swing, the radio commentator, recently wrote an article for the *Survey Graphic,* reviewing the past twenty-five years in world affairs. For a number of years after the last war, he said, nations had a series of choices to make. They were all resolved to avoid another war, but they went on, making the wrong choices. At last the point was reached when another war became inevitable. Nobody said "I will" or "I won't." We had entangled ourselves in inescapable circumstances as we thoughtlessly said "I'd rather." Will we have the good sense, asks Mr. Swing, to begin this time, as soon as the guns are silenced, to choose point by point in the direction of a world organized for peace and justice? If such a warning can be applied to the post-war world, surely it is appropriate for your lives today.

WHICH WAY?

You sow a word, and reap a deed. You sow a deed, and reap a habit. You sow a habit, and reap a destiny. The word you sow at the beginning of the process is the unassuming, modest little word, "rather." All of you want to be heroic in a crisis. What you do in a crisis depends upon what you are, and what you are depends upon the daily preferences you record as you say, "I'd rather."

It is not always easy to be sure which way to choose, even when you know the importance of the choice. I saw the train for Boston and the train for Chicago

waiting in the Grand Central Depot in New York, on tracks that reached out in parallel directions as far as my eye could see. "You'd better be sure where you are going before you get aboard!" said a smiling porter, as I hesitated. Somewhere, way off in the yards, a little switch would click into place and the trains would speed off, one toward the east coast, the other toward the west. The click of the switch which determines your destiny is the whispered decision, "I'd rather."

When in doubt, why not try the help you can gain from religion? Don't be like the foolish old sea captain who tried to navigate from stars he had painted on the ceiling of his cabin just above his bunk. When the stars are in your cabin, you can never tell where you are, nor whether you should steer to finish your journey. You must learn celestial navigation. You must take time to get acquainted with the constellations of God's eternal truth. You must gain guidance from the steady light of that North Star toward which men's eyes have turned with confidence for hundreds of years—the life and teaching of Jesus of Nazareth.

Then say, "I'd rather."

'That the Desert Might Bloom'

A Children's Sermon for Memorial Day

By George M. Gibson

AT the close of the Civil War, General John A. Logan, commander-in-chief of the Grand Army of the Republic, set aside the first Memorial Day on which the graves of those who fell were decorated with flowers. The beautiful custom has been followed for these seventy-four years.

Memorial Day now has a wider meaning. We remember not only the soldiers, but other heroes who have died. Many have given their lives in other ways than war, and in a variety of causes. We remember the heroes of the church who suffered that we might have a Christian world; the heroes of science who gave up comforts and often life that we might have more truth; those who have reformed public life to make it purer and safer; and the countless number of teachers, mothers, fathers, policemen, firemen and other workers who, without being famous, have shown high examples of courage.

RIGHT CHOICE OF HEROES

Choose your heroes with care! All of us, young and old, have some hero-worship in us. And the point is that we tend to become like the models we admire. First, we choose our hero; then we imitate his ways; then we are like him in our character. If our idol is a prizefighter or a movie gangster, it is time to check up and get a better model. But the rule works the other way, too. That is, when we choose the right heroes, we are helped by that choice; we tend to become like them.

True Christian courage is made up of many things—honesty, unselfishness, faith that the right will win, and boldness to go against the crowd when the crowd is wrong. Its purpose is always outside the self. Only once do we find the word "bravery" in the Bible, and there it is used in the sense of "showing off." But Christian courage never shows off. It does not display itself; it isn't proud—like a peacock. Rather it is quiet and calm. The man of true courage has in mind a task to do and a purpose outside himself for which he does it. Such was Jesus, the Master of men, as he went forward to do the work which God gave him to do.

GIVING LIFE FOR A GREAT PURPOSE

Perhaps you have visited Boulder Dam. There many thousands of men worked for years blasting and burrowing, climbing and carving, drilling and anchoring, welding and pouring. Like a great army they pressed their struggle against nature and time until the work was complete, with millions of tons of water impounded. In that great civilizing task, many men met death as heroically as soldiers on a battlefield. And they were not forgotten when the work was finished. There is an inscription to the eighty-nine men who lost their lives, reading: "For those who died that the desert might bloom."

"That the desert might bloom!" Now there's a purpose worthy of anyone! It's a purpose outside the self. The Christian neither lives nor dies for what he can get out of it. His interest is not in the money he gets while alive, nor the fame he leaves when he is dead. He gives his life for something not himself.

Memorial Day is our time for dedication. We offer ourselves for a better world, that its ignorance may have the light of knowledge, that its cruelties may be turned to kindness, and that its desert places may blossom like the rose.

Sentence Sermons

Men who are not deeply convinced of their faith, seldom make great sacrifices for it.

There would be more religion out on the street if we talked about it more in our homes.

The fortune of any nation is its faith.

God expects much more of the favored nation.

No nation can become great whose homes are on wheels.

Roy L. Smith.

Quotable Verse

O Mothers of the Human Race!

O MOTHERS of the Human Race,
Who, in the birthing of our breath,
The uttermost of suffering face,
And touch the very hem of death,
Will you not mother all mankind
Into one all-maternal mind?

O Mothers of the Human Race,
Whose milk is universal bread,
As all-sustaining as the grace
Of the heart's universal red,
Will you not feed us with the food
Of love for all the human brood?

O Mothers of the Human Race,
Protectors of our infant years,
Who wooed us to our first embrace,
And taught us laughter out of tears,
Teach us the gesture and the glee
Of the World Love that is to be!

ROBERT WHITAKER.

Peace

O BROTHER, lift a cry, a long world cry
Sounding from sky to sky—
The cry of one great word,
Peace, peace, the world will clamoring to be heard—
A cry to break the ancient battle-ban,
To end it in the sacred name of Man!

EDWIN MARKHAM.

Advice to a Student

LET crowded city pavements be your school;
Your text, the varied faces that you see;
An understanding heart and mind, your tool;
The art of human kindness your degree.

E. K. BIDDLE.

Who Will Build the World Anew?

WHO will build the world anew?
Who will break tradition's chains?
Who will smite the power of gold?
Who will chant the Spirit's gains?

War and hatred, let them go!
Caste and creed have had their day;
Pride and lust will lose their power—
Who will find the better way?

Who will preach that might is weak?
Who will teach that love is power?
Who will hail the reign of right?
This his day and this his hour.

Wars and tyrannies shall pass—
As did Babylon and Tyre—
Making way for prophet hosts
Shouting truth in words of fire.

Who will live to slay the false?
Who will die to prove the true?
Who will claim the earth for God?
Who will build the world anew?

THOMAS CURTIS CLARK.

A Pastoral Prayer

BY EDWARD SCRIBNER AMES

5-17-42

O GOD, Thou art so great, so manifold, of so many names and forms, forgive us if we seek Thee only in some little, some simple, some single form. If we could recognize Thee in the light of the sun, in the power of the wind, in the refreshing rain, and in the love of the human heart, we should have more constant companionship with Thee. And if we could know that in the process and order of sowing and reaping, in the fruitfulness of thought and toil, in the healing and inspiring companionship of love, Thou art made manifest, we should be able to rest our restless hearts in Thee.

In such a faith we would not suffer so many doubts, nor be plagued by so many disappointments and worries. We would know that to every humble and earnest soul there comes the sense of wholeness and beauty even when the lesser and the baser things seem to triumph and defeat us. Forgive us when we lose understanding of the difference between the inner and the outer, the high and the low, the sordid and the noble, the transient and the enduring.

Bless all who strive to find the open and the forward ways of life. Bless those whose lives are given to intelligence, love and sympathy. Bless mothers caring for their little helpless children, and parents seeking understanding companionship with youth, nurses ministering to patients, men laboring in many kinds of vineyards for bread, scholars searching for many kinds of truth, citizens hoping still for peace and justice in an outwardly harsh and violence-ridden world.

Make clearer to us the meaning and the possibilities of the messages of prophets, and of the words and works of Jesus Christ. May churches be impelled by his spirit and individuals constrained and inspired by his hope and courage. Help us, we pray Thee, to live by the standards of our better selves, to be generous and happy in paying the cost of the true treasures of life. Amen.

Sermon Outlines *from* PULPIT Readers

What Makes Life Worth While?

Text: A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.—Luke 12:15.

I. *Introduction* — In his teachings Jesus set up a norm of standard of life which was different from any that his contemporaries had ever heard.

II. *Body of Sermon*—(1) A man's life consists not in how much he has. (2) A man's life consists not so much in how much he has as in what he has, i.e., in having the right kind of things. (3) A man's life consists not so much in what he has as in what he is doing with what he has. (4) A man's life consists not so much in what he is doing with what he has as in what these things are doing to him. (5) A man's life consists not so much in what is being done to him as in what he is doing for his environment, both personal and material. (6) A man's life consists in being in right relation to the Source of all life, to God.

III. *Conclusion*—Since a man's life consists of being wholly possessed by God, let us yield ourselves and be thankful.

(Submitted by James E. Tate, Methodist Church, Camden, Ala.)

One God and One Worship

Text: Then shall the eternal be king over all the earth; the eternal on that day shall be the one God, and his worship one worship.—Zech. 14:9. (Moffatt)

I. *Introduction* — This statement was typical of the prophetic outlook. It showed the source of strength in the day of moving battle (v. 3), the crisis of division (v. 4), and the reality of perennial support (v. 8).

II. *Body of Sermon*—In that day—(1) "King over all the earth." His dominion shall be universal: the meaning in all discovery, the beauty in all art, the progress in all reform. (2) "Shall be the one God." His divinity shall be unique: unique as the ground of all good, the guide to all truth, the goal for all life. (3) "The one worship." His devotees shall be united by recognition of one supreme value (worth-ship), by reliance on one sufficient validity (worth-sustenance), by rejoicing in one saving virtue (worth-satisfaction).

III. *Conclusion*—Yielding to God's rule makes for worth-while living and a better world. Therefore yield.

(Submitted by Daniel Hughes, Welsh Presbyterian Church, Detroit, Mich.)

This Kingdom Is Revolution

Text: And being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God cometh, he answered them and said, 'The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo here! or Lo there! for lo, the kingdom of God is within you.'—Luke 17:20, 21.

I. *Introduction*—The importance of discovering what the much discussed kingdom of God really meant to Jesus, and therefore should mean to us.

II. *Body of Sermon*—The kingdom of God was a revolutionary ideal to Jesus. For it he was condemned to die on the cross. He would not have been sentenced to death unless he had been considered a menace to the established order. It was revolutionary (1) in its standard of personal integrity; (2) in its treatment of all enemies as brothers; (3) in its standard of self-giving; (4) in the supreme values which it placed on human personality.

III. *Conclusion* — How can this kingdom be reached today? (1) It must be passionately desired; (2) it must be realized that it is immediately achievable in the inner life, that no outer social order is its fulfillment; and (3) yet that it refuses to rest until the social order is brought into conformity with the Christian ideal.

(Submitted by James T. Browning, Grace Methodist Church, Bluefield, W. Va.)

In a Time of Tension

Text: Comfort ye, comfort ye my people.—Isa. 40:1.

A sermon addressed to those who have sent loved ones to military service. How maintain a hopeful view of life? (1) Live simply and naturally one day at a time. (2) Maintain visions of strong characters — St. Francis, Lincoln, Jesus. (3) Practice the doctrine of reconciliation. (4) Come regularly to church—the refuge in time of storm. (5) Throw oneself upon the never failing love of God.

(Outline of sermon by Albert B. Coe, First Congregational Church, Oak Park, Ill.)

The Church of Christ In a Warring World

With the nation at war, though hating war, what positively is the church going to do for its generation *now?* What is its special function in this needy time? (1) Keep on doing the important things it has been doing, only do them better. (2) Give practical service to people in need—at a time when need will be greater than ever before. (3) Keep alive those attitudes and qualities of spirit that will make a just and constructive peace possible. (4) Keep clear in man's vision and faith the eternal things amid the tempests of the temporal.

(Outline of sermon by H. E. Fosdick, New York city)

The Christian Traveler

Text: I am the way.—John 14:6.

Life is a journey. Early Christians known as "people of the way." Characteristics of a Christian traveler: (1) He sets out not knowing definitely whither he is going. Abraham. The first disciples. He seeks a City of Foundations. (2) He takes much seemingly unnecessary baggage—concern for others, their burdens, failures, sufferings. (3) He is guided by invisible maps. Demands of loyalty, duty, love; intuition; Christ's spirit. (4) He never reaches his goal in this life. Moses, Isaiah, Jesus journeyed far, but came to their earthly end with highway stretching ever ahead.

(Submitted by A. W. Beasley, Columbia, Tenn.)

Your Outline

The Editor welcomes from readers of The Pulpit copies of the sermon outlines they have used which seemed to them effective. Outlines should be typewritten, double-spaced, and no longer than those which appear in this issue. If a text is used, it should be quoted in full at the beginning. Originality and timeliness will be factors in the selection of those which are printed.

Making the Sermon March

By Albert W. Palmer

THIS is not a plea for militarism in homiletics! Incidentally, however, anyone who has the challenging opportunity of preaching to men in uniform these days, whether he be a chaplain or the pastor of a church near an army camp, may well take heed that his sermon does "march," if he expects to be heard with gladness by the soldier, sailor or marine. For we are all human, whether in uniform or out of it, and we get much more out of a sermon that marches than out of one that bogs down, wanders aimlessly about or goes round and round arriving nowhere—slowly!

Because the auditor's mind has to march with the sermon, we shall look at the sermon and its possibility of progress, development, unfoldment, goal and climax from the point of view of the man sitting in the pew or balanced uneasily on the even less comfortable folding chair.

● *The Preacher, His Text and Topic*

Even before the sermon begins, from the time he first sets eyes upon him, the prospective hearer is asking more or less unconsciously, concerning the preacher: Could he, himself, march? Does he look fit, alive and alert? Are his clothes well chosen, appropriate, neat, clean? Has he had a haircut recently? Has he personality, self-discipline and poise? Does he look and act as if he knew his business and was adept at what he is about? We judge a strange doctor or a grocery clerk by such criteria—can the preacher expect to avoid them?

The next thing which the pew-sitter wants to know, if he is to march with the sermon, is what the sermon is about. At least he is helped to get started by a topic. This topic can be either revealing and descriptive or imaginative and challenging, but it must not be stodgy, stupid or impertinent. The hearer does not care for "A Shave in the Devil's Barber Shop"—it sets him marching in the wrong direction! But an invitation to listen to a sermon on "Come Back, Mr. Chips," or "The Brotherhood of Pain," or "We Are Not Alone," or "Don Quixote Rides Again," or "Far-flung Frontiers of Truth," or "Some Hard Sayings of Jesus," or "The Folly of Being Hardhearted," or "Jesus Stands on the Beach," may make him say: "I'd like to hear what the preacher will say about that."

A text is often a rather good help in making the sermon march. A good text, radiant with meaning and challenging in its imaginative possibility, is very reassuring to the listener. It reinforces the topic and carries the thought one step further ahead. For instance, if the topic announced is "Cities of Lost Toil" and the text proves to be, "And they builded for Pharaoh," the possibilities of a sermon on how to build a city, and how not to build it, begin to develop in the hearer's imagination at once. But woe unto the preacher if they do not develop further and faster in his own imagination! It's a terrible thing to fail to come to grips with an imaginative topic or to show oneself blind to the latent possibilities of a text.

Albert W. Palmer

Sometimes the text itself contains the sermon in a nutshell, the thought and its inevitable development are all there, packed into a few dynamic words. Take, for instance, Paul's cry in the storm at sea: "God, whose I am, whom also I serve." (Acts 27:23). Other times the text can be trimmed down, relieved of all impedimenta and set forth in a light marching equipment of verbs only as, for instance: "Ye are . . . that ye may . . . " (I Peter 2:9) or "I have fought . . . I have finished . . . I have kept!" (II Timothy 4:7). Verbs are words of action and a text with emphasis upon the verbs, other things being equal, is apt to develop more marching power than one loaded down with nouns and adjectives. "As ye go, preach," "Plant wheat" and "He will not fail or be discouraged till he have set justice in the earth," are illustrations. (Isaiah 42:4).

Occasionally two texts may be better than one to give outreach and direction to the sermon. Who was it that first preached on "In the beginning God" . . . "In the fulness of time, Jesus Christ"? I have long cherished the memory of such a sermon with a double text by Charles R. Brown: "Lot pitched his tent toward Sodom" (Genesis 13:12) and "Abraham went out not knowing whither"! (Hebrews 11:8)

● *Where Is the Sermon Going?*

Supposing the topic and the text are satisfactory to both preacher and listener, the next thing is to make sure that the theme of the sermon is clearly defined. What is this sermon about, what objective has it, does the preacher know from the start just where it is going? It may help him to put it down in words, e.g., "Our cities are cruel, vulgar, self-destructive, because they have been built for Pharaoh when they ought to be built for God." If this information, this sketchy road-map of the country ahead, can be woven into the opening paragraph it may help the listener as well as the preacher to keep his sense of direction. Some good texts to experiment with, working out a topic and a theme to accompany them, might be: "We serve in newness of the spirit and not in oldness of the letter." (Romans 7:6) "In thy youth thou hast not gathered: how shalt thou find in thine old age? (Ecclesiastes 25:3) "A man that hath told you the truth." (John 8:40).

● *Purpose of the Introduction*

Having gone as far as we need to within our present limits of time and space in consideration of topic, text and theme, we now come squarely up to the introduction. Someone has said that the introduction to a sermon should be just that—an introduction. It should say: "Sermon, theme, this is my audience! Audience, this is my theme!" How long should it be? That depends. When asked how long a man's legs should be, Lincoln is reported to have said: "Long enough to reach the ground"! So a sermon introduction should be long enough to get the congregation and the sermon theme acquainted with one another and started on their journey.

The introduction to a sermon is not just a decorative feature, like a front porch which makes a house look better. It is a front porch which really extends a welcome, strikes a note of hospitality, invites the wayfarer to come in, and protects him from the rain. (This does not assume that the

sermon is necessarily dry, however.) It is a device to arrest attention, gather up into a unity the wandering thoughts of the congregation and force them upon the sermon.

● *Five Types of Introduction*

Introductions may be classified under five types and it is advisable to use them all—but not in the same sermon. (1) The problem introduction raises a question, states a difficulty which people face in ethical and spiritual living. It states it so vividly and arouses such great concern that the congregation is held by both curiosity and anxiety to see how the preacher can possibly find an answer to so challenging a problem. If the problem stated deals not with the Hottentots or the Hittites but with the day and age in which we live, this makes a very arresting introduction. It is Dr. Fosdick's typical approach to the sermon.

(2) A story has long been recognized as a captivating sort of introduction to a sermon, especially if the story carries within it the essential message of the sermon. It then becomes essentially a parable. Ever since the days of Nathan's rebuke to David, preachers have been alert to find or create stories that become, as it were, the theme-song of the sermon. This is the typical approach of Dean Charles W. Gilkey of the University of Chicago Chapel. I shall never forget how he began a chapel talk with the story of two little boys passing a church adorned with a large sign which read: "Smith Memorial Church." Said one boy to the other: "Know what that means? That means that the man what owns that church is dead!" A mighty good start for a sermon on "The Rule of the Dead Hand" or on "Who Owns the Church?"

● *Striking Literary References*

(3) A striking sentence often makes a good, and the only necessary, introduction. For example Bushnell: "What form is to the body, character is to the spirit."

(4) A striking literary reference will often do. For instance, a sermon can begin with H. G. Wells' striking statement: "Religion is the first thing and the last thing. Until a man finds God and has been found by him, he begins at no beginning and works to no end!"

(5) A contemporary situation will do. Paul used this type of introduction effectively before the Areopagus as he spoke of observing the altar to an unknown god. If the situation comes out of the preacher's own experience, as Paul's did, it is all the more telling, provided always it is not tinged with conceit or self-advertising. One does not help his cause by beginning: "The last time I had lunch at the White House"!

● *The Body of the Sermon*

But a sermon must march far beyond the introduction and, if the hearer is to go along, this means that there must be analysis, order, progress and climax in the body of the sermon. Professor Fred Eastman tells us that good drama is produced by putting a personality under pressure so as to crack it open and show what is inside. It takes conflict, tension, contrast to make good drama, and there should be a lot of drama in a good sermon. People are fascinated by seeing a subject skillfully analyzed, taken apart, revealed in its basic inner relationships. They want change, variety, suspense, even surprise in a sermon. And certainly a climax. There also need to be rhythms of interest and alternating moods. They don't want to see ahead of the preacher, he must keep ahead of them, and if they catch up while he dallies on, overelaborating a point already sufficiently made, they soon become bored. "March on!" they cry.

What I mean is admirably illustrated in a ten-minute vesper sermon Robert Norwood once gave in St. Bartholomew's Church, New York. His topic was "Enemies." He said he had three points to make: "First, the worst enemy is a friend gone wrong!" Then he showed in five minutes the tragedy of broken friendship. (Just think of that in the realm of international relationships today.) "Second: An enemy does himself the most harm!" Again in four and a half minutes he developed that idea. He had another point to make and a half-minute to go. How would he close? He leaned over the pulpit and with a most appealing gesture said: "And my third point is this: Do not be any man's enemy!" It was superb preaching. You could have heard a pin drop anywhere in the vast church. Everyone had followed breathlessly. It had analysis, drama, suspense, climax, passion and spiritual power. It marched!

● *Closing with a Challenge*

A sermon must not only march—it must stop marching! Sometimes the conclusion is the hardest thing about the sermon to manage. It is terribly hard on the audience to have the speaker overlook two or three good stopping places and move relentlessly on. It is fatal to say "And finally" and expect anybody to listen after that. And yet the sermon ought not to stop like a broken film in a movie theater. Sometimes a summary is useful, but more often it is a bore. Why not close with a prayer? Lift your sermon and the congregation up toward God in aspiration. But, just before that, challenge them with some implication of the sermon which there is no time to develop fully but which they can take home and consider by themselves.

Then the sermon is never really ended—it still marches on in quiet meditations, or maybe in talk around the dinner table of those whom it started thinking new thoughts that go on far beyond the horizon.

WAR will fail. How can we have any more treaties of vengeance without destroying the whole world? You cannot kill, mutilate, destroy in a passion of hate, for years, and then expect to make a lasting or fair peace. Therefore hate will fail, in the end. Victory will be no guarantee of security or of prosperity or of happiness. No longer can any empire ruthlessly try to rule the earth. We must rise above politics and economics and we must learn the hard, just, equal way of love. I say that Christians can love everybody and I insist that victory lies only in that direction. "Love never faileth."

JOHN RAY EWERS.

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WHO'S WHO in THIS ISSUE

REV. M. H. LICHLITER *was ordained* in the Methodist ministry in 1900 and served a number of churches of that fellowship, including churches in St. Louis, Baltimore and Cleveland. He entered the Congregational Church in 1919 and following a period of service at Newton, Mass., he assumed his present pastorate, First Congregational Church, Columbus, Ohio.

From 1915 to 1917 Rev. RALPH W. SOCKMAN was associate minister of Madison Avenue Methodist Church (now Christ Church), New York, and he has been minister there for the past quarter-century. He has broadcast over a national chain for many years.

Educated at Grinnell College, the University of Nebraska, the University of Chicago, Chicago Theological Seminary and the University of Edinburgh, Rev. ROBERT INGLIS held pastorates at Grinnell, Iowa, and Emporia, Kans., and since 1939 has ministered at Plymouth Congregational Church, Oakland, Calif. His sermon here published was preached just after the attack on Pearl Harbor.

Ordained as a minister of the Congregational Church in 1915, Rev. GEORGE A. BUTTRICK held pastorates in Quincy, Ill., and Rutland, Vt. In 1920 he went to First Presbyterian Church, Buffalo, N. Y., and since 1927 has ministered at Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church, New York. He has been president of the Federal Council and has written many books, of which the most recent one is his volume on Prayer.

Rev. CLARENCE E. LEMMON *was for* several years minister of the Hamilton Avenue Christian Church, St. Louis, and now leads the activities of First Christian Church, Columbia, Mo., important educational center.

Rev. BERNARD C. CLAUSEN *has min*istered at First Baptist Church, Pittsburgh, since 1933. Earlier pastorates were at Mt. Vernon, Hamilton and Syracuse, N. Y.

Rev. GEORGE M. GIBSON *is minister of* the United Church of Hyde Park, Chicago.

Rev. EDWARD SCRIBNER AMES *was for* forty years minister of the University Church of Disciples of Christ, Hyde Park, Chicago.

Dr. ALBERT W. PALMER *is president of* the Chicago Theological Seminary.

TITLES AND TEXTS

What Pulpit Readers are Preaching About

FRANCIS C. ELLIS, First Congregational, Riverside, Cal. "Beyond the Duration." Matt. 28:20—"Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

MIMS T. WORKMAN, Methodist, Montgomery City, Mo. "Conscripts of Jesus." 1 Cor. 2:16—"We have the mind of Christ." 2 Cor. 5:14— "The love of Christ overmasters us." (Weymouth)

ALBERT L. KRAMER, Westbury, L. I., New York. "Is God Asleep?" Psalm 44:23—"Why sleepest thou, O Lord . . . Wherefore hidest thou thy face?"

TALMAGE C. JOHNSON, First Baptist, Kinston, N. C. "The Race of Supermen." Rom. 8:19—"For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God."

D. W. CHARLTON, Eastport Baptist, Annapolis, Md. "Taking the Offensive." Exod. 14:15—"And the Lord said unto Moses . . . Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward."

G. S. SIUDY, Chaplain U. S. Penitentiary, Terre Haute, Ind. "The Tides of the Future." Mark 16:7—" . . . he goeth before you."

FOR YOUR SERMON AND TEXT

. . . . . .

Title of sermon

. . . . . .

Text used (write out the text)

. . . . . .

Name of minister

. . . . . .

Name of church

. . . . . .

Address

WILBUR L. DEMING, First Congregational, Washington, Conn. "In Defense of Ideals." Matt. 17:20—"Nothing shall be impossible to you."

W. JOHN PARKER, First Christian, Paducah, Ky. "Our Mighty Weapons." 2 Cor. 10:4—"The weapons of our warfare are not of this world, but are mighty before God." (Weymouth)

JAMES C. PERKINS, Federated, Schroon Lake, N. Y. "Christianity's Sixth Column." Psalm 1:1c ". . . nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful."

CHARLES B. WILLING, Presbyterian, Springville, Ia. "In God We Trust—Do We?" Psalm 20:7—"Some trust in chariots, and some in horses; but we will remember the name of the Lord our God."

ALBERT B. COE, First Congregational, Oak Park, Ill. "In a Time of Tension." Isa. 40:1—"Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people."

C. L. COPENHAVER, Edgehill Community, Spuyten Duyvil, N. Y. "The Asset of Loneliness." Matt. 14:23—"And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone."

L. F. RANSOM, First Methodist, Lonaconing, Md. "In This Frantic Age—Choose!" Josh. 24:15—"Choose you this day whom ye will serve."

HOWARD J. CONN, First Congregational, Great Barrington, Mass. "Living a Clean Life in a Soiled World." Col. 1:27, 28—"We preach 'Christ in you the hope of glory' in order to bring everyone to Christian perfection." (Goodspeed)

M. W. SINGER, Methodist, Kingman, Ariz. "Making the Best of the Worst." I Cor.—"Wherever I go, I thank God, he makes my life a constant pageant of Triumph."

The Editor's Page

The Event of the Month

LIKE all the rest of the world I have been watching the mission of Sir Stafford Cripps to India with prayerful hope for its success. Its apparent failure fills me at the moment with dismay. All too clearly, this failure is likely to have disastrous military consequences in the Far East. In spite of all Mr. Nehru says about the necessity for resistance, if the Japanese press their drive on India they will find the Indian people so divided, and most of them so discouraged, by the outcome of these negotiations that they are spiritually unready to oppose the invader. With India thus wide open, it will be a simple matter for the Japanese to cut off all supplies to China, except the few which Russia can send in by air or by caravan. Most of all, however, this failure in the negotiations dismays me because I know what a devastating psychological effect it is going to have throughout Asia and in other parts of the world of color where the old imperialism is under fire. If Sir Stafford Cripps or the British government had read the remarkable article which Mr. Nehru cabled to the April number of *Fortune,* they would have known before the negotiations ever started that their fate depended on what Britain was ready to offer *now.* Mr. Nehru and his colleagues contended that in a war government control of defense is equivalent to control of the government, and that until they were given that they were not given genuine self-rule. Perhaps it was too late to negotiate on that issue after the Japanese had begun to shell cities on the shores of the Madras presidency. But the failure of the Cripps mission now leaves the fate of India largely at the mercy of war's arbitrament. And I, for one, have no confidence in the rightness of that arbitrament—either for India or for Great Britain or for mankind.

The Failure of A Mission

The Book of the Month

THE LORD'S PRAYER. *By Ernest Fremont Tittle. Abingdon-Cokesbury Press. $1.00.*

EVERYBODY who has had contact with the ministry or personality of Dr. Tittle thinks of him as a man of great courage. I, too, think of him in that way. But I also think of him as a man of great magnanimity—in the sense of big-mindedness, which includes sympathy and unlimited patience with others. His courage is enveloped in this magnanimity, and that is the secret of his long and potent ministry at the "Cathedral Church of Methodism" in Evanston whose commuters think of Chicago as a suburb of their lovely university town. Tittle's courage shook up the dry bones of his community when he came home from the First World War and began to preach the social gospel from the new pulpit to which he had just been called. Many were sharply critical. But they soon found out three things about their new pastor. First, that he would stand like a rock for the things he profoundly believed; second, that his social gospel subtracted not an iota of his personal gospel; third, that the magnanimity of his spirit was such that you could differ with him and yet follow him and love him. The quintessence of this ministry is embodied in this little book on the Lord's Prayer. It consists of a series of sermons delivered to his own congregation. With rare insight, he discerns both aspects of the gospel—the social and the personal—in every clause of the model prayer. Dr. Tittle never lets his social message get "on the loose"—it is always kept leashed to personal Christian experience and to the great verities of historical Christian faith. If anyone who reads this review thinks the Lord's Prayer is not itself such an integration of the social, personal and theological aspects of Christian faith, let him read this book and he will be amazed at his own obtuseness.

A Thought for the Month

THOSE who challenge the kind of education which has had the right of way in Western democracies for a full century are steadily growing in number and influence. Something radical is the matter with our public education. Many are convinced that its central defect is its exclusion of religion. The defenders of the present system contend that even if it were practically feasible to include instruction in religion in the public schools, it is not desirable. One sharp reply should demolish this: Religion is already being taught in the public schools. It is being taught negatively in a manner that tends to break down the religious convictions and loyalties of those who have them, or leave those who have only vague religious ideas in a state of complete vacuity. Our schools have delivered back to society three or four successive generations of youth whose minds have been progressively denuded of religious knowledge and of respect for the objects of religious faith. This has a bad effect upon preaching. Consciously or unconsciously, the preacher dilutes his message with superficial appeals in order to catch the ear of the public. He thus cheapens both his message and his calling. I believe that the preacher should strongly resist this downward pull and preach more than ever on the great structural themes of Christianity of which the general mind—including the mind of the church itself—is so ignorant. The church must take its educational function far more seriously than in the recent past. And the religious forces of the community must find a way to displace the negative teaching of religion in the public schools with a positive and constructive method. I am one who believes that such a way can be found.

Religion Is Now in The Public Schools!

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